

## CHERRY PIE

no sleep two nights in a row  
or almost no sleep, and now i  
have to sit next to my supervisor  
in a diner, listening to her  
monotonous chatter while we  
have toast and coffee.

and this morning her voice  
seems extra jarring, if  
that is at all possible, and  
what she chooses to talk about  
holds zero interest for me,  
or for anyone else in the world,  
for that matter.

her makeup is thick and  
pasty, and her skin  
is exhausted, no doubt from  
the innumerable cigarettes  
she smokes. i don't know  
why she asked me to come on

this drive. i feel like  
telling her that the job  
is killing me, that

i cannot stomach the  
routine anymore, that  
the people back at  
the office are  
incurable nitwits,  
the lot of them.

but, i don't say anything  
of the sort.

instead i just sit  
quiet, faking listening,  
studying my  
reflection in the glass  
pie cabinet.

my nose  
is situated smack  
in the middle  
of a half-eaten  
cherry pie.

## THIS WOMAN

over breakfast she has this habit of wanting to talk about  
exactly how sex was the night before between us. we spend  
many mornings during our week just so involved, believe me



when i say this. not that i'm complaining, hell no. if the truth must be told: such a topic of concern blasts me off into the day in a very solid and confident demeanor. seldom do these private talks hold any criticism directed at me, and i certainly have none to level at her. the one problem we have encountered, at least in my mind, is that now with it being springtime the bedroom window is constantly open, and with two elderly people living right next door i have this fear that they can hear all that is going on between us. i'm afraid that they can hear her moaning and gasping, and frequent screaming from the sheets she is solely responsible for. i feel as though i am not showing proper respect for the ancients in our society. never have i been with such a noisy woman, never. at times it's thoroughly unnerving, and yes, i have voiced this one minor complaint to her, but she merely shrugged it off and suggested that perhaps her sounds of ecstasy might just be like music to the old people's ears. but this does next to nothing when it comes to quieting my fears, and since i am the one who is most often on the top of our pile of lovemaking bodies, i find myself every now and then, even in the wildest throes, peering out the window to see if the neighbors are out on their porch in their rockers, plainly in earshot. fortunately, i have never seen them there, especially when our lovemaking sessions break free after dark.

this morning when i was in the upstairs bathroom, brushing my teeth, i happened to spot the woman on the side of her house watering flowers, and i couldn't help noticing just how very old she really is. this caused me some relief, i'm ashamed to say, thinking that it very well could be the case that her hearing is not what it used to be. to test this out i coughed in the window, and just as i suspected she didn't budge her head an inch. and so i coughed again, this time louder, and still nothing, no acknowledgment on her part was evident whatsoever. then i screamed, a horrifying scream meant to curdle the blood, and expressly aimed at old blood. i screamed at her out the bathroom window as though i had just accidentally shaved off a precious piece of my nose. but not even this was capable of eliciting any response. this woman, watering flowers in the timid warmth of an early morning hour, watering so methodically and so lovingly, falling deeper and deeper into her own very heavenly silence—this woman was beginning to interest me.